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CONSOLATION

REV. CHAUNCEY GILES

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CONSOLATION.

BY THE

REV. CHAUNCEY GILES,

AUTHOR OF "MAN AS A SPIRITUAL BEING," "OUR CHILDREN
IN THE OTHER LIFE," "WHY I AM A NEW
CHURCHMAN," ETC., ETC.

"Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be
comforted."—MATT. v. 4.

SECOND EDITION

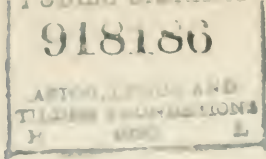
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BY
REV. CHAUNCEY GILES.

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TO THE BEREAVED.

THIS little book is dedicated to you in the hope that it may give you consolation in your sorrow, or at least direct you to the only source from which the healing of all wounded affections comes, and give you some hints of the means by which you can gain access to its consoling and life-giving power. When a great affliction falls upon us our eyes are so blinded with tears that we cannot see the heavenly light that is shining around us, and we need help to open them to a consciousness of its presence. We are so stunned by the blow that we cannot feel the gentle and soothing presence of Him who promises to comfort all who mourn. But oftener, perhaps, our wounded affections are so sore that we shrink from every contact and every effort to heal them. We feel helpless and we need encouragement to make an effort

to turn our thoughts away from our sorrow and lift them up to see "the silver lining in the cloud;" we need kind and gentle and wise counsel to win us to see and to enjoy the good that remains.

This little book is written in the hope that it may perform this use to some who are mourning the loss of children and friends who were as dear to them as their own life. It is written from the personal experience of the author. The incidents and the conversations are leaves from his own memory, and stand for many more of a similar nature. He has the happiness of knowing that they have been helpful in dispelling doubts and quieting groundless fears and leading to more intelligent and cheerful views in this life, subject as it is to many bereavements and sorrows, and to brighter hopes of the life to come.

Some passages from the Word of the Lord are printed on separate pages, in which He expresses in the most specific and emphatic terms His infinite and unchanging love and

mercy for all the children of men, His tenderness and pity for the afflicted and suffering, and His constant effort to save us from sin, which is the cause of all our pain and sorrow, and to bless us with every good we will receive from Him. This is a view of His character and disposition towards all men which we are prone to doubt in our bereavement and despair at the loss of those who are dearest to us. We must remember that these are not idle words; that they are distinct promises made by the Lord Himself; that they were made to be kept and will be kept to the letter when we comply with the conditions which are the only means by which the Lord can send the Comforter to heal our wounded affections and give us peace and rest.

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CHAPTER I.

WIDOWED AND DESPAIRING.

“As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

“For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

“As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

“For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

“But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.”—PSALM ciii. 13-18.

CONSOLATION.

CHAPTER I.

WIDOWED AND DESPAIRING.

“ I WISH you would call on Mrs. Luce and try to comfort her in her bereavement,” said a friend of mine who was accustomed to suggest to me a way of being useful to others when she saw an opportunity of doing it.

“ What calamity has befallen your friend Mrs. Luce that she needs help from a comparative stranger? She has her minister and many intelligent friends, who ought to be able to give her all the consolation that one person can give another.”

“ I know that. They have tried, but they have done nothing to lift her burden of sorrow or dispel one shadow from her mind; she continues to be perfectly hopeless and the picture of despair.”

“ What is the cause of her sorrow?” I asked.

“ Her husband died two weeks ago, and she is overwhelmed with grief at her loss. I have never seen any one so broken-hearted. She will see no one but her most intimate friends, and even their presence seems to be irksome to her. She has lost all interest even in her children, and sits in a darkened room brooding over her loss. I am really afraid she will become insane if something is not done to help her change the current of her thoughts.”

“ But what leads you to think that I can help her when all others have failed?” I asked. “ And my acquaintance with her is very slight.”

“ She mentioned your name the last time I saw her, and spoke of something she had heard you say, or had read of your writings, in such a way that I felt as though you might give her some comfort.”

“ If that is the case I will call upon her, and if I can do anything to comfort her it will give me great pleasure.”

According to my promise, the next day I called. As I approached the house there was every external indication that it was deserted. The shutters were closed on the first story, and the curtains were drawn over the windows on the story above. There were no signs of life visible. I rang the bell, and after waiting some minutes a servant came to the door and partly opened it, as though she did not intend to admit any one. I presented my card and inquired for Mrs. Luce. The servant said she was not seeing any one. I asked her to present my card, however, which she reluctantly

did, evidently showing by her manner that there was no use in doing it. But she soon returned, much to my surprise, saying that Mrs. Luce would see me.

I found her sitting in a room from which the light was almost wholly excluded. She greeted me in a faint and mournful voice, and asked me to be seated.

I told her I had heard of her great affliction and had come at the earnest solicitation of her friend, in the hope that I might give her some consolation in her bereavement, or in some way assist in mitigating her sorrow.

She said it was very kind in me to think of her; but she knew there was no help for her. Her life had gone out of her. There was nothing more left for her. She was incapable of thinking or doing anything. She had no more interest in life. He to whom she had given it had passed out of it. He had gone she knew not where, and become she knew not what.

She could not think of him as he was now. She could not love a formless spirit, and it made her shudder to think of him as lying in the cold, dark grave.

It seemed some relief to her to say so much about her own feelings. I had heard that she answered every one in monosyllables. She even put away her children when they were admitted to see her.

I replied that I could understand how so great a sorrow must absorb every thought and affection and darken the whole mind. I knew that so many most intimate, tender, and sensitive ties as bind husband and wife together could not be severed without the most intense suffering, and that they must leave an aching void in the heart which nothing else could fill. But still there were sources of consolation accessible to all; and that there was a balm for every wound, but it required time to heal these wounded affections; and there were

ways of mitigating our mental as well as our material suffering.

“There are none for me,” she replied. “They are too deep, too deep. I sit and think and think until I can think no longer. My mind becomes a blank. Everything is lost. Oh, the agony of it! What shall I do?”

“You have your children to love, and many friends who deeply sympathize with you in your bereavement and who would rejoice to do anything in their power to assist you,” I replied.

“Love!” she broke in with passionate emotion. “I cannot love. My love has all gone with him. It seems a sacrilege to love any one, even my children, or to care for anything since he has gone.”

“We can show our love for others by doing for them what they would do if they were with us,” I replied. “Did your husband love his children?”

“Love them! Of course he did. He was perfectly devoted to them, and it was one of his greatest concerns when he knew his disease was fatal, and his last request that they should be brought up to be good men and women.”

“Do they miss him and grieve on account of his death?”

“Certainly they do. Sometimes I think they feel his loss almost as much as I do. Though I must confess I have not seen much of them. I have been so overwhelmed by my own sorrow.”

“Can you not comfort them and help them by giving them your sympathy, and showing them that your loss and sorrow are mutual? I think you will find comfort in comforting them. Let them come to you and express their sorrow for your loss and their love for you. Talk with them, and be as brave and calm as possible. It will relieve you and help them.

Do it for your husband's sake. If he were present you would think it wrong to neglect any means in your power to comfort them in any of their little disappointments and sorrows. Should you not be still more desirous and prompt to do so now when they cannot go to him for comfort?"

"I have not thought of that. I am afraid I have been very selfish and have thought only of my own sorrow. But it was such a terrible blow. It seemed as though everything had gone from me."

"I am not surprised at that. Such great calamities do overwhelm us for a time. But they pass, and when the surprise and distress have in some degree subsided, we can consider them more calmly and look about to see what there is left for us to enjoy; or if that seems impossible, what there is for us to do. By the way, do you know what a bright and beautiful day it is?"

“No. I didn't know that there was anything bright and beautiful in the world.”

“There will not be for you if you shut out the light. The sun shines as bright and warm as ever, but if we close our eyes and exclude it from our houses it will not shine for us. It is the same with our minds. The Lord's love is as unchangeable as the sun, and His truth is as bright and clear. If we close our hearts against His love and refuse to be guided by His wisdom, it is not His fault if we feel forsaken and our way seems dark because we have been disappointed in some respects. Allow me to open a window and see how quick the light will come in and glorify the room, and bring with it the forms of a thousand beautiful things.

“There! you see the world is not all dark, though your room was. You will find it so in your own mind. There is much for you to enjoy though the great joy has gone out of

your life. There is much for you to do, more than ever, indeed, and when you take up the burden of duty and begin to perform it, you will find it continually growing lighter. Let your children come in to see you. Let them love you and express their love. Take an interest in their studies and amusements, and give them such help as you are able. Let the light, which is a gift from the Lord, come into your rooms, and in time it will flow into your mind, and you will find that there is much left for you to enjoy, and it would be a pleasure to him whose absence you mourn to have you enjoy it, if he could know it."

As I rose to go she even rose also, and said, "I thank you for calling. You have said some things which I shall remember, and I think they will help me. Come again soon, will you not? I am sure I shall want to ask you some questions suggested by what you

have said, which are already beginning to rise in my mind."

I promised to do so, and left feeling confident that I had given her some assistance in rousing her mind from its settled apathy and turning the current of her thoughts from herself to others. This is the first and essential step for those who are suffering from any bereavement to take. It is useless to try to forget; we cannot do that. It is useless to remain passive and wait for the keen edge of sorrow to become dull. The thoughts and affections must go out to others in useful deeds.

CHAPTER II.
THE DAWNING LIGHT.

“A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.”—PSALM lxviii. 5.

“Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.”—JEREMIAH xlix. 11.

“The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.”—PSALM cxlv. 9.

CHAPTER II.

THE DAWNING LIGHT.

I CALLED in a few days, and found more light in the room and more in the face of the bereaved wife, though it was by no means free from shadows.

“I am glad to see your curtains raised,” I said, “and I hope they are in some measure withdrawn from your heart.”

She shook her head and said, in pathetic tones, “Sometimes it does seem as though life was not quite so dark. The children came in as you suggested, and they were so gentle and so desirous to do something to comfort me that my heart was drawn out to them as never before. ‘We will be good, and do all we can to help you, mamma,’ George, who was always

a manly little fellow, said. 'When I am bigger I will work for you and take care of you, mamma.'

"I was much touched by their sympathy and desire to do everything in their power to help me."

"And I presume," I said, "that their visit did help you, and showed you that you had something yet to live for."

"Yes, it did. It lifted me up for a moment. But I soon sank down again. The waves of doubt and darkness swept over me. I cannot see why I should be so afflicted. We lived together so happily; we were so thoroughly united, and my husband was so useful to others in many ways as well as to his own family. I cannot see why he should be cut down in the midst of his usefulness while so many who are not a comfort to their families, and of no use to any one, should live on. It seems dreadful."

“ No, you cannot see. We cannot see anything in the future. We think we can see some things, but we are mistaken. Hence arises our disappointment. We often live to see that those events in our life which were the most trying, which seemed to destroy all our hopes, proved in the end to be the greatest blessings.

“ But we can see events and their consequences only on the surface, as they are related to this world. There are infinite results within and beyond them which they are instrumental in causing of which we know and can know nothing. In your husband’s removal from this world you can see your own bereavement, the natural loss to you and to your children. From the point of view of this world and this life you can see nothing but loss, and you wonder why the Lord should permit it, especially when you see so many who could be spared without any loss to their

families or to the world. But you do not see the consequences that lie concealed beneath the veil of nature which will result from it. If you could you would submit with perfect resignation to suffer the lesser, momentary evil for the permanent and greater good."

"You don't mean to say that some good great enough to compensate for this crushing sorrow will come to me and my children by means of it!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, I do. I have no doubt of it whatever, if you make the right use of it. The Lord never suffers an evil to fall upon any one unless it is to prevent a greater evil or to do us some positive good."

"I don't see how an evil of any kind can be the means of preventing a greater one or doing any good."

"Oh, yes; we act on that principle every day, and we think it a wise one too. I saw

in the paper some time ago that a friend of yours had one of his legs amputated. Was not that a great misfortune?"

"Yes, poor fellow; but it had to be done to save his life."

"So he voluntarily subjected himself to a painful surgical operation and the great loss of a limb to prevent a greater evil."

"I never thought of that before. But I don't see what greater evil could be prevented or what good can come from taking away a husband and father from his wife and children. Do you?"

"No, I do not. As I have said, we do not know anything about the real future; we can trace the consequences of our action on the surface for a while, but how the gain or the loss of any natural good will affect our spiritual interests, which are the only real ones, we have no knowledge."

"But is not death the greatest evil, the

greatest calamity that can befall a human being?"

"Yes, and no. It depends upon the kind of death you mean. If you mean the death of the material body, as I suppose you do, it is not by any means the greatest calamity. It is often, perhaps always, one of the greatest blessings. But, in fact, in your case there has been no death."

"Has been no death? What a strange idea! Is not my husband dead?"

"No: he has lost no more of life than the plant has when it bursts from the seed and springs out of the ground, or than the bird has when it breaks from the shell and comes forth into the world of light and into conditions for the exercise of its senses, and the freedom and consciousness of life."

"If my husband is not dead, or a formless essence which is called the spirit, what is he and where is he, and how can I think of him?"

“ He is a man in the human form, a solid and substantial man, with every organ that belongs to a man. In that respect he is no more changed than he would have been by going to London or any other place in this world. But he has not gone so far away from you as London, or even the next street. He is here and with you now; nearer to you really than ever before. He is in the spiritual world. But the spiritual world is here. We are all in it. If we were not we could not live a moment. We are in it just as the blind man is in the world of light. All that is necessary to come consciously into it is the opening of his eyes. So all that hinders us from seeing the people and the various objects in the spiritual world is the thin veil of the material body, which is removed by our resurrection from it. We do not go anywhere to some immense distance from this world. We remain nearest to those we love the best.

“As your husband is in the same form he has always been, has the same character, has lost nothing of thought or love, or any form or quality that constitutes a man, you must think of him in that form and possessing those qualities which awakened your love and drew you to him in such intimate union. Not a tie is broken. Think of him as you always have when he was absent from your natural senses, only nearer to you and responsive to every thought and affection.”

“Oh, if I could only do it, what a comfort it would be! But if I could only see him and hear from his own lips that what you have told me is true, I should be more comforted and content.”

“You think so; but you would not. If he should appear to you now you would be frightened. No, it is better as it is. Your husband has taken that step in life which every one must take. It is an orderly step ordained by

the Divine wisdom, and necessary to carry out the purposes of the Lord's love to bestow upon man the greatest blessedness."

"What a different view of death this is from what I have been taught and imbibed by all the influences of association with others! What a comfort it would be if I could only believe it as you seem to do!"

"Well, think of it. Even the possibility that it is true may be of some comfort, and it can do you no harm. It will dispel some of the shadows which have cast a gloom over your mind, and help you to think that there may be much happiness in store for you in this world even yet.

"If what I have told is true, it is full of comfort; and I am sure the more you reflect upon it and learn the relations of the Lord to men and the purposes of His love in regard to them, the more reason you will find for believing it.

“ I fear I have wearied you with my long talk, and——”

“ Oh, no. You have given me some new ideas that deeply interest me, and will help me to turn my thoughts to some more helpful subjects. You have really comforted me very much.”

“ I am glad to hear you say that. But the old states will return, and it will require resolution and effort and some help from others, it may be, to resist them.

“ Permit me to say one thing which may help you. If your husband were here clothed in his material body as formerly, and you had met with some great loss about which you mourned, as you have mourned about his loss, and would not be comforted, but settled down into a state of despair, how would it affect him?”

“ He would be doubly distressed. He would mourn with me, and for me. He would sym-

pathize with me, and my distress would add to his sorrow.”

“He would try to cheer you up and comfort you. So it will be now. If, as I have said, he is near to you in love and sympathy, he will feel your distress and it will trouble him. If he could speak to you he would say, ‘Don’t grieve so immoderately, I am not lost to you. There is nothing that disturbs my happiness or casts a shadow over my life but the unhappiness of those I love.’ Do you not owe it to him, then, to be as patient and cheerful as possible, and to take up the duties of life, which are largely increased by his departure, and perform them to the best of your ability, which I know is very great?”

“I will not ask you to answer this question, but only to think of it, and if it seems to you that there are some helpful suggestions in what I have said, act upon them at once. I

am sure you will find this a much better way of showing your love for your husband and your loyalty to him than by suspending the active duties of life, secluding yourself from society, and refusing to be comforted."

As I rose to go she took me by the hand, saying, "You are opening a new world of thought to me. You have comforted me, and I will try to profit by what you have said. But the weight of this sorrow is so great it seems at times as though it would crush me. Come when you can find time and help me to see the truth of what you have told me about death and the continued personal and real existence of those who have passed away from our sight. I am sure that would help me more than anything else."

"I will try to do it; but all my efforts will be useless unless you try to help yourself. Turn your thoughts to others who need comfort, and do what you can to assist them in

bearing their burdens. In doing this the Lord will help you.”

“Can’t He help me, if He desires to do it, without any co-operation from me?” she asked.

“No,” I replied, “He cannot. He has so constituted our natures that we can act freely and reciprocate His love and power. This gift of the Lord is man’s crowning excellence and glory. The Lord cannot give thought and affection and consciousness to a stone. He honors us by permitting us to co-operate with Him in receiving and giving life.”

CHAPTER III.

CONFLICT OF LOYALTY IN LOVE.

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

“And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”—MATTHEW x. 37, 38.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”—JOHN xv. 13, 14.

CHAPTER III.

CONFLICT OF LOYALTY IN LOVE.

I DID not see Mrs. Luce for more than a week after this visit, I was so much occupied with my regular duties. When I did call, I was pleased to find that there had been a decided change in the whole appearance of the house. The rooms were flooded with the unobstructed light. The windows had been opened, and the air was pure and refreshing. She was engaged in some domestic duties when I arrived, and asked to be excused for a few minutes. I was pleased at this, for it showed that she was recovering from the stupor caused by the terrible blow to her affections and was beginning to become interested in the common duties of life.

She soon entered the room, with less languor in her step and more life in her manner than I had seen before. Her voice was clearer and her face brighter, though shadows of her sorrow were by no means dispelled from it. She greeted me with more interest than on my former visits, and seemed less inert and passive, and more expectant of help from our conversation.

“ I see you are recovering from the terrible effects of your bereavement and are beginning to take up your work bravely and do it faithfully.”

“ Yes,” she replied, “ I am trying to rouse up my faculties, which seemed to be dormant if not dead. But I find it very hard. While I sit and think of my loneliness and weakness, deprived of his counsel and encouragement, upon which I depended, it seems impossible and useless to make any effort. Then a thought of the children or a call from some

one breaks the current of my feelings, and I stop thinking and begin doing."

"That is right," I said. "That is true wisdom. That is the only way to dispel the numbness and increase the little strength remaining. Action, action in some useful work is the only way to dispel the shadows which darken your mind."

"But then the thought arises that I am forgetting my husband; that it is a want of loyalty to him to think of anything else or feel interest in it, and that shocks me. If I could only feel that I was not forgetting him; that I was not wanting in devotion to him while I was thinking about others and doing something for them, it seems to me I could feel more freedom in taking up the duties of life once more."

"There is a way to become interested in others, and even absorbed in your domestic and social duties, without detracting from

your affection for your husband; a way in which, indeed, you will be drawn nearer to him."

"How can that be? If it is possible, it will relieve me from a great trouble. As I see the necessity of my entering upon my usual occupations, there is a constant struggle between my duty to others and my loyalty to my husband. How can they be reconciled?"

"Easily enough," I replied. "Do your daily duties from love to him as well as those whom you serve. Then your love for him will enter into and be a powerful motive in everything you do."

"That is a new idea. I must think about it and try to see it more clearly. If I only could understand it, it would remove an immense difficulty from my path."

"You have been doing this with more or less faithfulness all your married life. In the ordering of your domestic affairs you con-

sulted his comfort and pleasure; you have been guided by his tastes and means in selecting your dresses and ornaments; you have been guided by his tastes and wishes in your social relations; and if you will trace the motives of your life up to their source, you will find that they have been constantly influenced by your love for him and desire for his happiness."

"I can see plainly enough that that is so. But now he is gone from me, and I can do no more for him."

"Why, then, should you feel under any obligations to think or care for him any more? But he has not gone from you. He is nearer to you than ever before. His love for you is as strong as it ever was. His transition to the spiritual world has had no more effect in weakening his love for you than it has in weakening your love for him. You have, therefore, only to go on living for his sake

and doing what you think would be pleasing to him, as you have done. Then, however deeply interested and active you may become, it will draw you nearer together. You will be loyal to him and honor him in caring for the health and providing for the happiness of your children and the welfare of all within the circle of your influence.

“ You must excuse me if I have spoken too earnestly. The subject is an important and deeply interesting one, and of universal application. You know our Lord says, whatever we do to others for His sake, He accepts it as done to Himself. ‘ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’

“ There is another point connected with this subject which I fear you may overlook and which is important to your own happiness, and that is, its relation to yourself. When people are bereaved as you have been, they

sometimes think it is 'wrong for them to be happy."

"Oh, yes, I have felt so, and it seems to me so now. It seems as though it would be almost a sin to enjoy anything, and shocking even to smile."

"Would your husband think so, do you suppose? Would he desire to see your eyes red with weeping, and to have you go with a sad countenance mourning all the days of your life and refusing to be comforted?"

"I know he would not. If he were conscious of it, it must destroy his happiness even in heaven."

"Then for his sake be comforted, and enjoy all of life that remains to you. Enjoy your children. Enjoy the society of your friends. If the most precious source of happiness is apparently removed from you, enjoy what remains. It is the duty of every one to do that. It is ingratitude to the Lord not to do it."

“It is easy to say, ‘Enjoy society.’ It is easy to think of it. But I cannot do it. It seems as though there was a thick veil before my face, and everything looks dim and dark. There is an aching void in my heart which nothing can fill. I do think I will rouse up and take an interest in the duties and friends about me. But I cannot. My mind falls back and dwells upon my irreparable loss. I try not to mourn, but I do. I try to think that brighter days will come, but I cannot see how. Can feelings be changed from sorrow to joy by mere force of will?”

“No, they cannot.”

“Why, then, do you tell me to be bright and cheerful when you know I cannot be.”

“I don’t know that. While it is true that you can no more change wounded and painful feelings to sound and happy ones than you can heal a severe wound in your flesh or a

broken bone by force of will, it is still true that it can be done."

"How? Do tell me!"

"By using the proper means. There must be a purpose to do it, and then the proper means must be sought and used."

"What are they, pray, and where can I find them?"

"I have told you of some of them. But perhaps you have no desire to have this gloom dispelled, to come into the light, regain your cheerfulness, and find joy in life. Have you?"

She hesitated a moment, and then, looking up, answered, "Yes, if my husband could be restored to me."

"And if not?" I asked.

"It cannot, cannot be," she replied. "There is no use in trying. I must bear this crushing burden of sorrow. No one can help me. But you have helped me some for a time, and I will listen to anything you may say."

“We cannot do anything by mere force of will. You cannot sweep a room or prepare a meal, or even take a step or utter a word, by mere force of will. We must have means; we must have the will, for all our power lies in the will; but we cannot exercise it without the instrumentality of means.”

“I see that plainly enough. Then the real question is, What are the means?”

“They are abundant. You must do something, instead of sitting and brooding over your sorrow, and in that way nursing it. You must do something with your hands that will require attention and thought, and, if possible, awaken interest. Begin with something that is nearest to you. You have done that in some things, and while you were doing it you forgot your sorrow and found a ray of comfort.”

“Yes, and I felt as though I had done wrong and been unfaithful to my husband.”

“That is not a true or worthy feeling, as

we have just seen. How can that be neglect when you are doing what he would have you do, and would be delighted to assist you in doing? You have some things to unlearn as well as to learn."

"I see that I have. The lessons are difficult ones, but I will try to learn them."

"It is important that you should settle the question we have been considering, that it may not stand in the way of your taking those steps which will lead to light and peace. The Lord loves all men with an infinite love. His love is not diminished by increase of the numbers who are the subjects of it. It is not a fixed quantity which can be exhausted. He does not love one person less because He loves others. This is in the very nature of love. It is one of its essential qualities. Is your love for your husband less since you have children to love?"

"Certainly not. It seems as though I

loved him more, since they came to be a blessing to me and to him.”

“Do you find your love for your first-born diminishing with the advent of others?”

“Why, no. How absurd the question! My love for each one increases rather than diminishes.”

“And you do not feel that you are disloyal to one or to your husband for loving another?”

“Certainly not; such a feeling never entered my heart.”

“You see the principle now. You can extend its application to as many as you please. It is a law of the Divine order that the greater number an unselfish love embraces the stronger and purer it will be for each one. You need have no fears of being disloyal to your husband or to your children because your affections take a wider range and embrace a greater number of persons.

“ There is another law of life in the constitution of our natures of the greatest importance inseparably connected with the one I have stated. Our own affections become enlarged and enriched by extension. The more love we give to others the more we receive. We receive it from those who reciprocate it from an outward way in the form of speech and deeds, and we receive from the Lord from within. It comes to us also from both directions in varied forms.

‘ Kind words, good deeds, they make not poor;
They’ll home again, full laden, to thy door.’

“ Do you not see the truth and reasonableness of this view?”

“ Yes, I am sure I do, and we will regard it as settled. It will trouble me no more.”

CHAPTER IV.

LOSING LIFE, GAINING LIFE.

“Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation;

“There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

“They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”—PSALM xci. 9-12.

“Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.”—PSALM xc. 15.

CHAPTER IV.

LOSING LIFE, GAINING LIFE.

I WAS called away from home, and did not see Mrs. Luce again for three weeks. I felt deeply interested in learning what progress she had made in rising out of the depths of her despair and coming into the light. I was confident that she would gain strength to bear her burden, which would make it seem lighter; that her wounded affections would gradually heal, and that she would return to the old habits of thought and life, though I knew they would never be the same. Those who have suffered a great affliction cannot think and feel as they did before. Something has passed out of their life which never can be regained. Everything appears in a new shade or tint

of color. It may be brighter or darker, but it will not be the same. All human relations and duties have lost or gained something; seemingly have lost, but really may have gained a new significance. Some things which we have highly prized have lost their value, and others which we regarded as of little account are seen to be important.

The attempt is often made to comfort the afflicted with the idea that they may forget. But it is in vain; we never forget. Who that has ever seen a lovely child, whose innocent and charming ways had entwined him in their deepest and tenderest natural affections, pass from the home on earth to the home in heaven can forget the gift, the awakening consciousness, the winning ways, and its untimely fading away from natural sight? Who that has ever been called upon to part with husband or wife, whose natures have been knit together by the interchange of thought and

affection in the daily duties and delights of domestic life, can forget the awful wrench caused by the sundering of the most intimate, tender, and sensitive affections? It is impossible in the nature of the human mind. Indeed, we never forget anything. But the sharp and distinct outlines of all natural events and the most painful experiences can be modified and softened and made less distinct; they can be overlaid, as it were, by other subsequent events, and removed to a distance by intervening experiences which absorb our attention. They no longer stand out bold and distinct and arrest our thought and exclude our view of all other things. But we never can forget them. They have entered into our life and become a part of ourselves. The waning life and the open grave and the vacant house will always stand out as a landmark in the journey of life, where one of its important circuits was completed and

we entered upon a new state. It requires time and often persistent effort to dull the keen edge of such a sorrow and to enable us to reap the great benefit it was intended by the Divine Providence we should derive from it.

These thoughts occupied my mind as I was going to renew my visits to my bereaved and sorrowing friend.

I found her, as I hoped I should, with a brighter look in her face and the indications of a more active state of all the faculties of her mind. She gave me a cordial but subdued greeting.

“I feared,” she said, “that you had forgotten me or given me up as a hopeless case.”

“No,” I replied; “your fears are groundless. I have neither forgotten you nor thought of you as a hopeless case. I was called away from home and returned only yesterday. But I am glad if you thought enough of my visits to fear that I should not repeat them. It

shows that I may have said something to interest you."

"Indeed you have," she replied. "You have awakened entirely new trains of thought in my mind. You have given me new ideas, which interest me so deeply that I involuntarily dwell upon them. But they suggest so many new thoughts and open so many new doors that I am almost afraid to follow them."

"Yes," I replied, "I know that is the nature of new truths, and they are very troublesome sometimes. They awaken doubts and fears and show us some things we do not like to see. They disturb old states and break up old habits of thought, and reveal duties that are painful to perform. But if they are genuine truths we need not hesitate to follow them, for they never fail to lead to some good. If they induce us to resign any natural good, it is only that we may get a greater and imperishable good."

“ In my own case, for instance, in the loss of my husband, is it possible that a greater good, or any good, can come to me from that?”

“ Yes, if you will accept it. We often gain more by the loss of natural possessions than we do by retaining them.”

“ How can that be?” she asked, with surprise.

“ They may prevent us from seeking anything higher. If we were nothing but a superior kind of animal, the loss of any means of gratifying a natural appetite and worldly desire might be a total loss. But we are not. We have a spiritual nature which is as much superior to our natural worldly nature as the most perfect animal is to a plant or a stone. Anything that diverts our attention from that and leads us to neglect its interests or in any way prevent its development is a positive loss, however delightful may be its present indul-

gence. We may be so comfortably situated in our domestic and social relations and so well provided with means for the supply of our natural wants and tastes that we have no desire for anything higher, and we fear any changes. We are content to live as we are. This is more or less the case with multitudes of people. If they want any change it is to gain more of the same kind, but not to rise to anything higher. In such cases it may be a great blessing to have the pleasant routine of life broken up, that they may be led to think and strive for something higher. Children thrown upon their own energies for support often make much more useful and noble men and women than they would have done if every want had been supplied and every desire gratified by indulgent parents. We see the operation of this principle every day in our children. They never would learn to walk if they were always carried."

“ I see that in many things in my own children, but I do not see how it applies to such great and terrible changes as the death of the most important member of a family ; that breaks up the course of life. What possible good can come to me or my children out of this bitter sorrow ?”

“ As I have said before, I cannot tell in what special form a more precious good may come to you, but I am sure it will come in some form if you will accept it.”

“ If I will accept it ! Do you suppose I would refuse any blessing that was offered me that could compensate for so great a sorrow ?”

“ You might ; many persons do, and fail to derive any other good from their afflictions than the chastening and restraint upon their natural desires.”

“ But how can any one in affliction refuse to receive a blessing when it is needed more than ever ?”

“Because it is not seen to be a blessing.”

“In my case, for instance, can any good come to me in my desolation and despair that I should not most gladly and gratefully welcome?”

“I hope not; and yet it might.”

“I cannot believe that. It seems too absurd. What could it be? Can you give me no hint of it?”

“Perhaps I can. I will try; but I do not promise to succeed, for the greatest blessings are the least appreciable by the senses. In our first conversation I think you told me that you could not think of your husband as alive, as a man in the human form, possessing all the knowledge and affection and all the qualities of character that were his while living in this world; that he was living among men and women in a substantial world, holding all social relations and living a real, conscious, human life.”

“ Yes; that was my real feeling. It seemed as though he had vanished into a formless essence and was lost to me forever. And I often feel so still. Some things you have said have given me a faint hope that it may not be so; that he is still living near to me, and that I shall yet see him and be consciously reunited with him. It is a blessed hope which sometimes gives me comfort, though I fear it may be a delusion.”

“ It leads you to think about him as alive and in a real world, does it not? In other words, you have a distinct and substantial object in your mind for your thoughts to rest upon?”

“ Yes, that is so; and I find it a great help. My thoughts do not wander off and vanish into indefinite space. And sometimes, when I am thinking of him, he seems to be near me, and a calm comes over my perturbed spirits and a new power takes

possession of me, a power which I have never felt before."

"Suppose this should continue to increase; suppose what is now a hope and an occasional feeling should become a settled conviction, based on what the Lord has revealed in the Sacred Scriptures, and presented in a form to produce rational conviction and to meet every want of your heart, so that you had no more doubts about the substantial nature and life of the spiritual world and its inhabitants than you have of this world!"

"But can such a delightful state ever be attained? It seems more like a pleasant dream than a reality," she replied.

"Yes; it has been attained, and it can be again. You have caught glimpses of it when your thoughts and affections have risen above the illusions of this world. The dearest object of your affections has gone there. Make it real to you, and you have a distinct object

in that world for your thoughts to rest upon, an object bound to you by the strongest and tenderest affections, which will exercise a constant and powerful attraction to draw your thoughts and affections there. If your husband had gone to England or Australia, a keen interest would be awakened in your mind to know as much as possible about those countries."

"I know it would. But I have no means of learning anything about the spiritual world; and while I try to think of him as you have represented him, I find it very difficult, and long

'for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!'"

"I know and appreciate the feeling. But the more you reflect upon and become familiarized with the thought of the substantial existence of the spiritual world and of the vast multitude of human beings who have gone

there, the more real it will become. You will think of it as your future home, where you are to live forever, and find your society and the means for the cultivation of your affections and intellectual faculties and happiness. You will have gained a new world and a new state of life to think about. With this knowledge will grow upon you the supreme importance of cultivating heavenly affections and fitting yourself for association with the pure and intelligent beings who have gone before and will come after you. You will begin to live the life of heaven upon the earth. Suppose this temporary bereavement and conscious separation from your husband should have this result. Suppose, which is really the truth, that he has gone before to prepare a place for you, a more beautiful home than any one on earth possesses, and to assist you in developing those qualities of character which will fit you to occupy it, will

not this fully compensate for your short and partial separation? Will not the separation, painful as it is, be an inestimable blessing to you?"

"I cannot deny that it would be if all you picture should come to pass. But will it, will it? How can I know it? How can I be sure of it?"

"It will if you do your part. It all depends upon you. If you sit here secluded from society, cherishing your grief, and perhaps some resentment that your husband has been taken from you, the good will not come. It cannot come because you close your mind against the influences that would produce this effect. You must open your heart to these affections; you must try to keep your thoughts upon the means of rising above this state of despair."

"But how can I? They will sink down to it in spite of all my resolutions and efforts."

“You cannot change your thoughts and affections by merely willing. Many persons make a great mistake by attempting to do it, and meet with great disappointments.”

“How, then, can they be changed? You seem to demand impossible conditions,” she replied, in a tone of despair.

“No, I do not. Feeling and thinking are not sufficient to accomplish anything. You could not get out of your chair by feeling you would like to do so and thinking about it. You must put your desire or purpose into act. You must do something. In your present condition you must do something for the good of others, with the purpose of doing them good. That is a heavenly motive, and it will bring a heavenly influence with it, an influence which contains in itself a soothing, healing, uplifting power.”

“But what can I do? Some great thing,

I suppose. I haven't the means or the strength to do that."

"Yes; you must do the greatest thing that a human being can do."

"That is impossible. There is no hope for me, then; I cannot think deeply and long upon any subject. There is but little strength in my hands. I could not speak in public. What can I do?"

"The greatest and the easiest thing in the world. You have St. Paul's description of the greatest of all virtues: Professor Drummond, in his 'Greatest Thing in the World,' has beautifully and clearly described it."

"Oh, yes; it is charity, or love."

"Yes; that is the greatest thing that men or angels do. But it must be love that is not only felt. It must be done. It must be embodied in act. It must bear good fruit. You will have opportunities enough to do that, and, instead of exhausting, it will give you

strength. But I have said too much, I fear, and exhausted your patience if I have not your strength. So I will say good-morning, in the hope that a brighter day will soon come to you."

As I rose to take my leave she said, "You must not be discouraged with me. You have given me much to think about, and I will try to keep it in mind and follow your advice."

"Have no fear that I shall be discouraged. It will give me pleasure to do anything in my power to assist you, and if at any time I speak too plainly, you must not forget that it is from the kindest motives."

CHAPTER V.

LIGHT FROM THE GRAVE OF BURIED HOPES.

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”

“It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.”—MATTHEW xviii. 4, 10, 14.

CHAPTER V.

LIGHT FROM THE GRAVE OF BURIED HOPES.

I DID not see Mrs. Luce again for some weeks. I thought I had said enough to change the current of her thoughts and rouse her up to engage in the duties of life, if anything I could say would do it; and that it would be better for her to be left to her own determination and action. The only help you can give others is that which leads them to help themselves. If they will not co-operate with you, the wisest instruction is of no avail.

When I did call I found a decided change in her appearance. There was a smile upon her face and an elasticity in her movements and a strength in her voice that I had not noticed before.

“I am glad to see you,” she said, “especially this morning, for I have just come from a call upon a dear friend whom I want you to visit. We were school-girls together and have always been quite intimate. It was only yesterday I learned that that awful scourge diphtheria had visited her little flock and taken her only son, a beautiful boy six years of age, from her heart and home. I felt as though I must go to her, though I have not been out of the house before since my husband’s——” death, she was going to say, but checked herself, and looking up with an expression in her face which meant more than words—“since my husband’s resurrection, you would say.”

“That is truer to the fact than the word you had on your lips,” I replied.

“I found her almost frantic with grief. Do you know, can you believe it? her minister had told her that God was angry with her because she loved her son more than she did

Him, and He had taken him away in His wrath to punish her for her idolatry. He not only could give her no comfort, but he added the terrible blow of the Divine vengeance to her already sorely wounded heart. He told her she must repent and submit to the chastening rod of the Almighty, and in time He would heal her wounds and mitigate her sorrow. The thought that her love for her darling child had been the real cause of his death drove her almost to madness.

“ ‘ What shall I do?’ she said. ‘ How can I live? My darling boy has been taken from me; his beautiful form buried in the cold dark ground, and all the bright promises of his future blasted; and then, that it was because I loved him so dearly! Oh, cruel! cruel! how can I bear it? Where shall I go for comfort? I cannot go to the Lord, for He is angry with me. I cannot get any consolation from my minister. He leaves me in deeper

despair every time I see him. I cannot bear it. See how beautiful he was,' she said, uncovering a photograph which she held in her hand. 'Yes, I loved him, I love him now; but this is all that is left of him. This lifeless shadow instead of the beautiful form glowing with life and happiness. I love him; I cannot help it. Can it be a sin to love him?'

"'No,' I replied, 'I am sure it cannot be. The Saviour loved little children, and took them up in His arms and blessed them. Surely He cannot be angry with you for doing what He did.'

"I did what I could to comfort her. I told her some of the things you had told me as well as I could recollect them. I tried to encourage her to hope, that she could find comfort as I had done. I told her how much you had helped me, and asked her if she would not like to see you. She hesitated at first, but she finally consented. She felt the need of

help so deeply that she was willing to seek it from any source, and I want you to call upon her."

"It is a delicate matter," I said, "to call upon an entire stranger under the circumstances; but I will do it. It can do her no harm, and I may possibly say something that will give her comfort or show her where she can find it.

"But you have forgotten yourself in your interest in your friend."

"Yes, I believe I have. Her condition seems so pitiful I cannot keep her sad face out of my mind. I wish I could do something to relieve her of the crushing burden of her sorrow, or if that is impossible, to help her to bear it."

"Cherish the desire and some way will open to help her. Your visit will do her good. It will break up or modify the train of her thoughts, and that is a necessary step

to turning them into a new channel. In doing that you will change your own."

"I have not thought of myself in the matter at all. I forgot all about myself when I saw the depth and keenness of her sorrow."

"That makes it the more certain that in communicating a blessing you will receive one. You have some evidence in this event of the truth of what I have told you. The sure way to get comfort is to give it. It will never fail. It is according to a law of the Divine order, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you.' You remember the widow who had nothing in her house in a time of famine 'save a pot of oil.' The prophet commanded her to borrow vessels of her neighbors, and pour out the oil. This she continued to do until she had obtained oil sufficient to pay all her creditors and filled all the vessels she could borrow; then only the oil stayed. This touching miracle embodies a universal law. Every

one who needs our love is a vessel which we must borrow to fill with the oil of love from our own pot. The more vessels we can borrow the better. As long as we continue to pour out, the oil will flow, and we shall have enough for our own wants and all claims upon us. Your friend is a vessel and you are filling her heart with the oil of love, and it will assuage her sorrow and heal her wounded affections. You will find other vessels 'not a few' which you can borrow for the same purpose. Indeed, you will never want for vessels to receive your love if you seek for them, and this we must all do if we would become enriched ourselves."

"But I do not see how we become enriched by giving to others. I should think we should be impoverished by it."

"No; as we give to others the Lord gives to us. Life is a stream which constantly flows into us from the Lord. It is like the air we

breathe. Its reception gives life, sets all our faculties in motion, and gives us strength to do our work. The more we give to others the more the Lord can give to us. Our affections and all our intellectual faculties become enlarged and perfected. We can receive more love and of a more precious quality. We gain in every way by giving love to others. We are not impoverished, we are enriched by giving. If you had remained shut up in your room and continued to brood over your sorrow you would have closed your mind against the Lord's love and prevented Him from healing your wounded affections and giving you comfort and hope."

"Do I understand you to say that the Lord is constantly giving us His love and trying to help us out of our troubles and make us happy? Is He doing it now, this minute, to me?"

"Certainly. Does not He give us the air

we breathe, and the light which enables us to see the world around us and the faces of our friends? Everything that is good is the Lord's gift to us."

"But the air and the sun and the earth were once created and remain."

"They would not, however, if the Lord did not create them every moment. We will not discuss this deep subject now, however. I have alluded to it because it will help us to do our work and bear our sorrows to believe that the Lord is a 'present help in trouble.' That He is, every moment, doing all He can for the happiness of every one. The only limit to His bounty is our willingness and our capacity to receive."

"Willingness to receive? Can any one be unwilling to receive blessings from Him? That seems impossible. How can any one be so foolish?"

"We all are in some respects, because

His blessings do not come in the form we expect and desire them. May I give your own case as an illustration? You have had a hard struggle to believe that comfort could come to you by giving comfort to others. But you have found it to be so in some measure, and the more you practise it the more you will find the truth of it in your own happy experience."

"How differently you do present everything from what I have been accustomed to hear! Your ideas are so new and strange that it will take time to become familiar with them. But they do seem rational, and they are so helpful and comforting. I shall think of them; I cannot help it. But every new idea awakens others, and suggests no end of questions I desire to ask."

"Ask as many as you please. I will answer all I can.

"But we must not forget your friend.

What arrangements shall we make for my calling upon her?"

"I will see her to-morrow, and I will write and let you know when it will be convenient for her to receive a visit from you."

"Very well; set the time, and I will call, unless prevented by some necessary engagement."

I called in a few days, for I desired to help the despairing mother as soon as possible. I do not know when I have seen a sadder face or met a more crushed and despairing spirit. The poor, bereaved mother received me in an indifferent, passive manner, as though she took no interest in my visit and had only consented to it at the solicitation of her friend, but with no expectation of deriving any comfort from it. She replied to my questions in monosyllables with a feeble voice, and the prospect of getting access to her mind was not in the least favorable. She shrunk from

every approach as though she expected to receive a blow. I knew that the dear boy of whom she had been bereaved was the only subject in which she was interested, and I began to make some inquiries about his appearance and her hopes with regard to his future life.

“Mrs. Luce says,” I remarked, “that your son was a bright and beautiful child, and gave promise of becoming an intelligent and useful man.”

“Yes, indeed, he did,” she replied. “He was in some respects very precocious. He had a sweet and gentle disposition which won all hearts and made him the light and joy of the house.”

“I suppose you intended to give him a good education and fit him for any position that might be open to him.”

“Oh, yes: a mother has her dreams. How vain and disappointing they are!”

“Perhaps they are not so much so in your case as you suppose.”

“What do you mean? Is not my darling boy dead and all the bright hopes of his life blasted?”

“That may be the appearance, but it is not so in reality. Your boy is not dead; on the contrary, he is more alive than ever; and your brightest hopes with regard to him will be more than fulfilled, though not in the way you expected.”

“I do not think I know what you mean,” she replied, looking up to me for the first time.

“It is not possible in this world for children to grow up to be men and women, even in the most favorable conditions,” I said, “without being subject to sickness and physical suffering. Success cannot be gained in any business or profession without severe labor and many struggles and disappointments.”

“I know that, and I have feared for my

dear boy when I have thought of it. I see so many who lose their money or never gain it, whose health is ruined, and if they succeed in one respect they lose in another. Life is such a terrible struggle."

"Your boy will gain all you could ask for him in these respects without severe labor or painful struggle or any possibility of loss. He will never suffer from disease. He will not have an ache or a pain or a disappointment of any kind."

"Neither does a stone," she replied, with emphasis. "How can he when he is buried in the ground and has lost all consciousness and life?"

"I see your thought follows him to the grave and rests there. But he does not. He was not deposited there. It was only the earthly garment which clothed him that was laid away in the ground."

"But I cannot follow him beyond that. I

cannot think of a spirit which has no form. There is no object for the thought to rest upon. There is no beauty, no substance. It is nothing but a breath or a vapor which vanishes away. A breath or a vapor or a formless essence could not be ill or suffer or enjoy. My boy was so beautiful and active, so intelligent and happy. A pure spirit is not my darling. If he cannot suffer he cannot love and enjoy."

"What you say is true if a spirit is what you conceive it to be. But it is not. The spirit is in the human form. The spirit is composed of all the organs which combined constitute the human being. The spirit is the seat of all the affections and intellectual faculties which make us human beings. It gives form to the body both in general and every least particular. The truth about the relative substantial nature of the body and the spirit is exactly the reverse of common opinion.

The spirit is the permanent and substantial being. The body is merely the temporary clothing, and soon turns to dust, while the spirit retains its form and permanent existence. The change we call death is simply the resurrection or withdrawal of the spirit from the material body which clothed it. If you could see your boy as he is now you would see him in the same form, with the same beautiful face, glowing with love and life, if anything, brighter and lovelier and more joyous than ever. You would find the same love for you, the same intelligence. If he could speak to you he would say, 'Oh, mamma, don't grieve so. I am not dead; I am more alive than ever. I am not in the ground; I am in a world a thousand times more beautiful than the earth. It is far brighter, and everything is more lovely. I have a delightful home and pleasant companions, and everything is done to make me happy. I am well and strong, and

find new things to interest me every day. I have delightful teachers, and it seems so easy to learn. The lessons are about live and interesting things. If you knew how happy I am you would not grieve.' ”

“ Oh, if I could only see him and hear his sweet and joyous voice and know for certain that what you say is true, it would be such a comfort! Can it be true? How can it be?”

“ Yes, it can be true, and it is true. How can it be otherwise? Is it not more rational and more in accordance with the Lord's love and wisdom than the idea that he has become a formless essence which cannot love or think or feel and is flitting about in a dark and formless world like a wandering cloud? When our Lord said, ‘ Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven,’ did He not mean something more than that they were to

be dissipated into formless vapors or buried in the ground? When He said, 'In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also,' did He mean that we were going into empty space, and to lose our form and our power to love and know and enjoy and all the means of happiness? Can anything be more absurd than that?"

"It would certainly be delightful to believe what you say," she replied, with some emotion.

"Well, believe it, or at least hope and think that it is true. Think of your little son as alive and placed in circumstances better fitted in every respect to escape all pain and disappointment and sorrow than you could have procured for him if you had the wealth and wisdom and power of the world, and the best means to develop pure affections and all his intellectual faculties."

“How can I? I have been taught so different.”

“I know it is harder to unlearn than to learn, but I think you can compel yourself to look at the bright picture, and I am sure you will find great comfort in it. I leave it with you. Think of it. There certainly are as good reasons for believing it to be true as there are for believing the common dark and doleful one, when those who teach it say they do not really know anything about the spirit or the spiritual world.”

As I rose to go she said, “You have given me a new view of the subject which I shall think about. But I find many questions rising in my mind which I would like to ask you. Will you not call again and give me an opportunity to ask them?”

“Certainly, whenever it will be agreeable to you,” I replied.

“I am afraid I may be a little impatient in

my present state of mind. Can you come to-morrow?"

"I have an engagement which will prevent my seeing you to-morrow. But I will come the next day unless prevented by some special demand for my services."

CHAPTER VI.

FINDING THE LOST ONE.

“Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.

“Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”—MARK x. 14, 15.

CHAPTER VI.

FINDING THE LOST ONE.

I FOUND the bereaved mother in much the same state of mind as when I left her.

“I have been thinking and thinking,” she said, “about my dear boy, and trying to make real the beautiful picture of him you gave me. But the terrible change from life to death which I saw is impressed so vividly upon my mind that I cannot think of anything else. I cannot look beyond the grave and conceive of him as alive and active as he was before his fatal illness. And my heart does so ache to see him once more. It seems as though I could not bear it. I try, but I cannot force

myself to think of him as alive and well and happy, as you say he is."

"I know you cannot force your mind to change all its thoughts and opinions by a direct action of the will. It will take time. But we do change our opinions upon many subjects when we see good reasons for doing it, and it can be done upon this. We must look for the reasons, and we must reflect upon them and make them familiar to our minds. It requires time and some determination of the will to consider the new views. This is more difficult where the natural affections are deeply involved, as in your case. They draw our thoughts to the object of interest and tend to hold them there."

"How can I think of anything else than my dear boy? He was a part of my life."

"Don't say *was* a part of your life. He has become a part of your life and will always remain so. You need not try to forget him.

You cannot do that. You need not try to eradicate him from your affections. You need only to change the way you think of him. You take it for granted now that he is no longer yours. You speak of him as lost, as dead. You think of him as turning to dust and vanishing away. But he is not lost; he is not turning to dust; he has not lost his form or his intelligence or his power to love, to know, and to enjoy. He is as much your child as he ever was. He has only gone to another place, where he will find everything that can conduce to the development of all his faculties, and where he will be free from all the hinderances and evils and dangers to which he would have been liable if he had remained in this world. He was never so much alive as he is now, never so happy, never so eager to learn, and never saw so many beautiful objects to attract his attention, awaken his curiosity, and delight his heart. He is

nearer to you than ever before. He has not gone away from you, and if you do not close your heart against him he never will."

"Oh, I never could do that. How can you think so?"

"But you do by thinking of him as dead, as lost, and no more your son. You annihilate him in your thoughts and mourn over him as forever lost. Is not this the cause of your grief? Like Rachel, you will not be comforted because he is not."

"But how can I help it? I cannot see him or hear his pleasant voice; I cannot feel the pressure of his warm embrace. He does not come to me with joy in his eyes to tell of his little pleasures or ask for some little favor. His absence makes the whole house silent and empty."

"It is true he is not present to your senses. He would not be if he had gone away to school, where you would probably have sent him in a few years."

“ But he would have come back again, and I should have seen him and heard his joyous laugh and felt the pressure of his hands. Now he cannot come back.”

“ That is true. He cannot come to your natural senses, and therefore, you say he is dead. You make your senses the test and limit of life. The Lord does not come to your senses. You cannot hear the voices or see the forms of the angels, and they are the most substantial and powerful beings in the universe. The prevalent opinions and feelings about the human spirit are all false. The spirit is the real person. It is the seat and subject of all our thoughts and affections. All our power and life reside in the spirit. It organized the body, and gives form and life to it. The body is only its clothing and instrument by which it can live and perform uses in the material world. When the spirit leaves it, the body loses all its power and becomes dust.

We must turn our thoughts from the body to the spirit, and think of that as the real person which is to live forever. Think of your boy as alive in the form in which you have known him. Look up from the earth, and think of him in the new world he has entered, and in which he is to find his home forever. He will grow up to be a noble, pure, and intelligent man, free from all the stains and imperfections of this life and the hinderances and burdens of a material body."

"Grow up to manhood, do you say? Then I shall lose my beautiful boy, and I never shall know him even if I should see him."

"Yes, you will; you will see him and know him. Would you wish to have kept him a child if he had remained in this world?"

"Of course I should not. It would have been a delight to see him grow up into manly stature and strength."

"Yes; you would have regarded it as a

great calamity if he had stopped growing and remained a child. Would it not be as great a calamity to him to have remained so forever in the spiritual world? A large part of the inhabitants of the spiritual world entered it as infants and children. What a terrible misfortune it would be to them to remain in that condition forever! There would be just occasion for sorrow when a little child departed from this life, if it were to remain in the helpless and undeveloped condition forever."

"I had not thought of that. I wanted to see my boy just as he was when he left us. But I know it would be sad indeed if he were forever to remain as a child. But I did not think that he could grow."

"It is the spirit that grows even in this world. If it did not, the body would remain a helpless infant. The spirit weaves the body around itself of the substances we eat. The body does not grow when the spirit leaves it.

This is conclusive evidence that it is the spirit alone which possesses power and life. If you will regard human beings as spirits, simply clothed in a material body, you will see evidences of the truth of the fact every day. It will give you comfort in your bereavement, and give a new meaning to life in this world. Above all, it will entirely change your thoughts and feelings about the departure of friends and dear ones from this world. You will see that it is not a punishment inflicted upon men for their sins, but a regular and orderly step in life, as orderly and essential to man's complete happiness as birth into this world is. It is a birth into the spiritual world, where our spiritual faculties awake to activity and consciousness as our natural faculties do when we are born into this world. What people call death and mourn over as the direst calamity that could befall them or their friends, is indeed the greatest blessing, and when under-

stood, is one of the clearest manifestations of the Lord's infinite love and wisdom. Think of it in this large and impersonal way, and you will not only find much to comfort you in your natural bereavement, but you will find evidences of the Lord's love for you and your dear boy that will help you to see that He will bless you as much in the removal of your son from his earthly to his heavenly home as He did in giving him to you."

"I cannot see what reason there can be for blessing the Lord for such a terrible affliction. He must have taken my boy away to punish me for loving him so dearly. That is one of the most terrible thoughts about his death. I could not help loving him. How could I? he was so lovely and beautiful."

"Then don't think of it for a moment, for it is utterly false. Your love for your child was the Lord's gift. Could He punish you for doing what He created you to do and gave

you the power to do, and what He Himself does?"

"Why, then, did He take him away from me?"

"He did not. He never takes away any blessing from us. He did not cause his illness. You know how it came. He does not cause any pain or sorrow of any kind. A Being of infinite love and wisdom can only love, and do everything in His power to make His children happy. He permits pain and sorrow to come upon us because He cannot prevent it; but He never causes it. And when they do come, He does all in His power to bring as much good out of them as possible."

"I do not see what good can come to me from this terrible bereavement."

"I presume you cannot now, but the time may come when you will."

"Do tell me what possible good can come from so great and painful a loss!"

“ It may lead you to think more truly concerning your relation to your children, and, if I may use the expression, concerning your ownership in them.”

“ What do you mean? Are they not mine?”

“ Yes, and no. They belong to you in preference to any other person. You have the claim of motherhood, a claim which no one can dispute. It is one of the dearest and most intimate relations that one human being can sustain to another. But still you have no inherent and exclusive right to your children. They are the Lord's. He created and gave them to you to nurture and train up for heaven. To make the care and labor, which is often very severe, as pleasant as possible, He gave you your mother's love for them, which makes your care and labor a delight. He rewards you for this service whenever you render it. You did not originate your love for your children.”

“Why, then, does He take them away so that we cannot love them?”

“He does not take them away, as I have told you. You do not think that He takes them away when they become of age and marry and leave their home. It is a wise and universal law of the Divine order that children leave their parents, that families be dissolved, and natural ties severed. Disease often makes the separation premature; but the separation itself is inevitable, and it is carrying out the great purpose of the Lord’s infinite love and wisdom.”

“Do you mean that death or, as you call it, departure from this world is carrying out the purposes of the Divine love?”

“Yes, certainly I do; as truly as the springing up of the seed from the ground in which it is planted is in accordance with the Lord’s purpose in providing man with food and the materials for clothing. The spiritual world is

man's home. He was made to live in it, and it is superior to this world in every respect. It is as much more excellent than the material world in every form, substance, and quality as the air and light, and the kingdoms of nature, and all the conditions necessary to the development of a bird's faculties and the attainment of its joys are to the egg in which it was created. But the bird could not get into this new world without leaving that."

"You do present everything so differently from what I have been taught that I hardly know what to think. You represent death, which every one regards as the greatest calamity, to be the greatest blessing. It is a delightful belief, and must be a great comfort to those who accept it."

"I hope you will find good reasons for doing so. I am sure you will, if you earnestly seek for them. They are abundant enough in the Bible and in everything around us in

nature. The more you examine the subject, the more abundant and convincing you will find them, and the more comfort and help you will derive from them. But whatever you do, never think of your boy as dead. He is more alive than ever. Do not cease to love him. He is as much your child now as he ever was. Think of him as a treasure laid up in heaven, and 'where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' If you do this, you will find that the transplanting of your little son from the nursery on earth to the paradise above will be a great blessing to you. You will not think of him as lost in any sense, but as saved beyond any possibility of failure in obtaining the largest measure of a noble life and the greatest happiness possible for him to receive and enjoy. You will delight to think of him as having gone to school in heaven with angels for his teachers. You will thank the Lord for permitting you to be instrumental

in giving existence to a human being who is to be the subject of so much joy and happiness.

“But I fear I have wearied you with such a prolonged talk. The subject is so interesting, and seems to me so important and consoling to the bereaved, that I do not know when to stop.”

“I am not in the least weary. The thoughts you have presented are entirely new to me, and so comforting that I cannot but be interested. I shall think of what you have said, and I am sure I shall find some light and comfort from it. But these new views of our relation to our children give rise to so many questions, I would like to ask that you will call again when your duties will permit.”

Promising to do so, I bade her good-morning, with the satisfaction of seeing her face much brighter, and the feeling that her thoughts were turning away from death to life, and from the sepulchre to heaven.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM APPARENT TO TRUE RICHES.

“A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.”—PSALM xxxvii. 16.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and annoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”—REVELATION iii. 17, 18.

“If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”—LUKE xvi. 11.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM APPARENT TO TRUE RICHES.

ON my return home I found a note from my friend Mrs. Luce requesting me to call, as she wanted to ask me some questions and needed assistance. I did not know whether the help she needed was for herself or others. I hoped it was for others, but it was possible that one of her old doubts was tormenting her again. I was glad to learn that my fears were groundless. When I called at the appointed time she greeted me cordially. Her face was glowing with subdued but lively interest, which showed that she was entering upon a new and higher state of life.

“I have another patient for you,” she said, “and I hope you will be as successful in treat-

ing her as you have been with me and some others."

"Well," I replied, "there is a balm for every wound. There is not so much difficulty in finding the right remedy as there is in getting the patient to take it. But who is the patient, and what calamity has befallen her?"

"She is an old school-mate, with whom I have been upon intimate terms for many years. Her name is Brown; she married a rich man and has lived in great affluence all her life. But her husband has lost all his property in some great commercial enterprise, and they are now reduced to poverty. I tried to comfort her, but found her case entirely beyond my power, and so, with her permission, I have come to you, and I hope you can do something to help her in this great crisis in her life. She will see you at any time when you have the leisure to call."

"This is a case I am not familiar with,"

I replied; "but the remedy is the same for disappointment and sorrow from whatever cause it may arise. It is of universal application, and never fails of a cure when the directions are faithfully followed."

"You have great confidence in it," she said, "and, so far as my experience goes, it is justified by the results. But I do not see how you can be sure that it will be efficacious in every case."

"My confidence is based on the fact that the Lord Himself prescribes it. It is a law of the Divine order. It is the Lord's way, and therefore must be certain in its effects. When we begin to turn our thoughts away from ourselves and look to the good of others and do something to help and comfort them, we come into the currents of the Divine order, we become subject to the laws of infinite wisdom which all tend to promote our happiness. No one can suffer while living in the harmonies of

this order. I must not detain you with repeating what, I presume, I have told you before, though this is a subject upon which we need 'line upon line and precept upon precept.' I will call upon your friend, and do anything in my power to help her bear her burden and make it as light as possible."

When I called I found her surrounded by every comfort and luxury which money could procure. She greeted me politely, but with some reserve, and asked me to be seated.

"I have heard from your friend Mrs. Luce," I said, "of the great misfortune that has fallen upon you and your family, and I have come at her request, in the hope that I may be able to suggest something to help you to bear the burden of this great change in your domestic and social life which such a loss must necessarily produce."

"It is very kind in Mrs. Luce to think of me, and of you to come on such a hopeless

mission," she said. "I do not know what any one can do to change the stubborn facts that we have lost our property and must take the consequences, which seem to me to be so dreadful that the thought of them appals me."

"Perhaps," I replied, "they may not be so great in reality as you imagine them to be."

"I do not see how the idea can be greater than the reality," she replied. "It necessitates a total change in our whole mode of life. I must give up all the luxuries which have become necessities by long use. We must leave this beautiful house and these spacious grounds. I may be compelled to sew or do domestic work for a living. My husband may be forced to become a clerk, and my children—— Oh, I cannot bear to think what will become of them!"

"This would be a severe trial indeed," I replied; "but you have not come to it yet. Why load yourself down with burdens before

they come upon you? It will be time enough to feel their weight when they do come. You may never be called upon to bear many of them, and, if you are, they may come in an entirely different and less oppressive form than you imagine. But don't go out to service or solicit sewing to support your family until you are compelled to. Enjoy what you have, and do what you can to comfort your children and sustain your husband to-day. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'"

"That is wise counsel, I am sure," she answered, "but it is difficult to follow it. I sit here and think and think, and shrink with terror at the thought of so great a change in our life. My husband comes home every night so weary and depressed that my heart aches to see him."

"My advice to you, then, is not to sit here and think of imaginary evils, but do something for your children. Go out and breathe

the fresh air; call upon your friends, and put a hopeful face upon the changed condition in your circumstances."

"Call upon my friends! I have not the courage to do that. I am afraid I could not find many friends among my fashionable associates. They would pity me and say some commonplace and unmeaning things; but they could not give me a word that would encourage and help me. No; I prefer to remain at home and do something for my children and husband."

"That is the grand panacea," I replied; "you will forget yourself, and for a time your troubles also. But this is only palliative. There is a way in which you and your family can get greater happiness and a more permanent and precious good out of your narrower circumstances than you did out of your ampler means."

"Can that be possible?" she asked. "Do tell me how."

“I have not the time to-day, and perhaps I have wearied you already,” I replied. “But with your permission I will call again and tell you how to find the greater good.”

“I shall be much pleased to have you,” she replied, “and I shall look for you with deep interest.”

In a few days I called again, and found her quite busy in preparing to move, but she promptly left her work and welcomed me quite cordially.

“I don’t think you know how hard it is to uproot one’s self from such a beautiful place as this, which has been my home for many years,” was her greeting. “It seems as though my affections were interwoven with every object within and around the house by the most intimate associations, and leaving them seems like tearing them out of my life.”

“I presume I cannot,” I replied; “but I

know the process must be a very severe one and require great resolution and endurance.”

“ Ah! if you knew how many times I have said I cannot, and been ready to sink down in despair, you would pity me, I am sure. But I have tried to follow your directions, and have found some relief in doing it. But how we are to find a greater good in the loss of our property than in the possession of it I cannot imagine.”

“ If we were created to live in this world alone and enjoy its natural comforts and delights, no greater good than an abundance of its possessions could be gained. But we were not. We have wants which no amount of worldly possessions can ever satisfy. They were intended to be merely means and instruments for the development of our spiritual faculties. Whenever we become wholly absorbed in getting them or enjoying them, and they are the supreme object of our affections,

they become harmful to our supreme interests ; they obstruct the development of the noblest and most precious human faculties, and they bar our entrance into the kingdom of heaven."

"Do you mean to say that was the case with me and my husband?" she asked, with a little sharpness in her tone. "I have attended to all my religious duties, I have contributed liberally to the Church and to her benevolent institutions, and I am not aware that I have been remiss in any of them."

"No," I replied; "I am stating general principles. I leave you to apply them. If you find upon reflection that you were loving the world less and the Lord and the neighbor more; that your thoughts naturally turned to subjects of a spiritual nature, and you found a growing interest in them, it would indicate that you were obeying the Lord; that you were leaving natural worldly things and following Him."

“Do you mean that it is wrong for us to enjoy the good things of this life?” she asked.

“No,” I replied. “They were given to us to use and enjoy, but not to love supremely. They were given to us to be the servants of a heavenly life, and not hinderances to it. But the love of the world is very subtle and powerful in its influence to blind us to our true condition. It is easy to give money of our abundance. It costs us but little, and is of very little spiritual value. We may even do it from a selfish or worldly motive. The true test of our love is the personal interest we feel in promoting the happiness of others, and the amount of personal attention and effort we are willing to give to the Church and other worthy efforts to relieve the sufferings of humanity and elevate the character of the people around us. You know what the apostle says: ‘Though I bestow all my goods to feed the

poor, and have not charity, I am nothing.' Charity consists in doing good to others from love to them. It is a personal work. Giving money may be one of the means and it may not. But the doing is the essential thing that the act may be charity in us."

"You do not regard it as necessary, then, that we should impoverish ourselves to do good to others," she said.

"By no means," I replied. "That might prevent us from helping others. We are to use what we have, as wise stewards of the Lord's bounty, to promote the supreme end He has in view in all His works, and that is the salvation and happiness of men. Wealth is always useful to us when we employ it for this purpose, and harmful when we do not. When we are entirely content with our natural possessions and have no aspirations for anything higher and nobler than simply to enjoy them; when we practically say to our soul, 'Soul,

thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry,' it is a blessing to have them taken from us, that we may know upon how frail a foundation we are basing our eternal happiness. When our natural possessions, however abundant and precious they may be, do not satisfy the wants of our nature, and our affections have become so firmly rooted in them that we cannot extricate them without some help beyond our power, then it may be a great blessing to have them taken from us, however severe the wrench, that, freed from their weight and entanglements, we may rise to something higher and better which the world can never give. Many persons have lived to see that they gained more happiness by the loss of their wealth than they did by its possession."

"This is a new and strange doctrine," said Mrs. Brown, "and I hope it may prove to be true in our case."

“I am sure it will,” I replied, “if you accept the change in a right spirit and try to make the best of it.”

I did not see Mrs. Brown again for many months; but I heard from her friends that she bore the change in their circumstances with fortitude and even cheerfulness. She became personally active in many good works for the alleviation of human suffering and improvement in the condition and character of the people. They were not reduced to absolute poverty. Her husband saved sufficient, with the salary of an important position he obtained, to make them comfortable and to leave some margin to assist others, and she learned by happy experience the truth of the Divine words: “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.”

CHAPTER VIII.

GIVE AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOU.

“The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger and of great mercy.

“The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.”—PSALM cxlv. 8, 9.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”—MATTHEW xi. 28, 29.

CHAPTER VIII.

GIVE AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOU.

THERE is a sure way to gain relief from all our burdens of care and sorrow; there is a balm that will heal every wounded affection; there are infallible means to extract a blessing from the greatest natural calamities. These remedies never fail in effecting a cure for our evils when applied according to the prescribed rules. They are easily obtained, and are offered without money and without price.

They have been partially expressed in the preceding interviews with those who have been bereaved of loved ones. But it may be effective and useful to state them in a more connected and rational manner than was possible in conversation. We are slow to believe

that the Lord who has all power does not act in an arbitrary manner, giving or withholding His blessings, rewarding and punishing according to His regard for men, much as fallible human beings do when they possess the power. But the truth is exactly the reverse of this. He neither rewards nor punishes from caprice or personal favor or dislike. He always acts according to universal and immutable laws, in the dispensing of all His favors in the spiritual as well as in the material plane of the creation. These laws are the methods by which infinite wisdom carries into effect the purposes of infinite love. The Lord provides good and only good for every human being, and when men step out of this Divine order they suffer. But still there is in these very laws a tendency to relieve their sufferings and restore them to harmony with the order of infinite wisdom.

There are laws of the Divine order in the

healing of wounded affections, and means which the Lord Himself has provided as infallible remedies for the cure of all man's spiritual diseases. He is doing now what He did when on earth. He is in the constant effort to heal all manner of disease and sickness among the people, and He does heal all who come to Him of every sorrow and distress. He sends no one away.

If we could believe this, or had sufficient faith in it to give the remedies a fair trial, how many hearts burdened with some bitter sorrow would be relieved! how many minds darkened by severe affliction would be made bright and joyous!

One of these means of relief and comfort has been somewhat urged as a sovereign remedy for profound grief, and experience has proved its efficacy. But the reader may not think that its power has its cause in the nature of the human mind and its relations to the

source of life. This, however, is the fact. The human mind is so constituted that its faculties can be harmoniously developed only by the transmission of affection and thought to others. Life would stagnate and the whole nature become corrupt like a standing pool if the currents of life ceased to flow.

We see evidences of this law, which is universal, in ourselves and in everything around us. If the air which flows into the lungs and gives motion and sensation to the body were held there, we should be suffocated. If the heart were to retain the blood in its own chambers, instead of passing it on to supply the wastes and nourish the whole body, all physical life would become extinct and the body would turn to dust. The same law rules in the realms of the spirit. It is true it does not become extinct like the material body, because it is indestructible; but its form and order become perverted. All harmony in its

action is destroyed, and cares and fears, anxieties and grief, and conflicting emotions fill and torment the mind. There is no peace to the wicked. The human spirit, like the human body, is composed of innumerable organs or vessels for the reception of the life which is constantly in the effort to flow in from the Lord. It presses upon every vessel as the atmosphere upon the material body. It is the river of life, and makes everything live to which it gains free access. Just in the degree we close our minds against its inflowing we exclude normal and healthy life from our minds. If we refuse or fail to pass it on in the form of affection, thought, and useful deed, it becomes perverted in its nature, loses its life-giving power, stagnates, and causes all the mental sufferings humanity endures.

But if we pass it on to others in unselfish affections embodied in comforting and helpful truths and kind deeds, we keep the currents of

life in motion; they flow through our spiritual bodies as the blood flows through the arteries and veins of the material body, carrying the bread of life of which they are composed to every vessel and pore of the spirit, feeding every hungry mouth, and refreshing every thirsty affection with water from the river of life. They soothe irritations, they heal wounded affections, they give strength to the weak, they lighten the burden of care, they assuage the sorrows of the bereaved and give hope to the forsaken. There is no sorrow which they cannot heal. It is in their nature to do it in the same sense that it is in the nature of wholesome food to satisfy hunger and of pure water to quench the thirsty lips. They are the spiritual substances of which the human mind or spirit is composed, and they flow according to the form and order of infinite wisdom in the creation of man.

We can act with these forces or against

them. We can turn them out of their normal course by our love of self and the world, arrest their progress and pervert their wholesome life-giving nature, or we can pass them on to others in kind words and useful deeds, as an expression of our love for them. When we do this we are in the currents of the Divine harmonies; we are lifted up and borne onward by the Divine forces. As we give to others the Lord gives to us; we are constantly refreshed with new life from the source of life. Our affections are enlarged and purified, our intellectual faculties are quickened into new action and glow with a new and serene light. We see light in the Lord's light,—that is, the illusions of the senses are dispelled and we see our relations to others in their true form. The path of life which leads to heaven and the Lord grows plainer, and we gain strength to walk in it and delight in doing so. We see that it leads through the hearts and under-

standings of others, and like the blood in its circuits through the body, we help to cleanse and remove the substances which have done their work in the wear of life; we give power and gain power; we give life and receive it. It is, therefore, according to the immutable laws of the Divine order in creating, preserving, and blessing men, that we should do to them as He does to us. These laws are expressed in the two great commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The point I desire to make and emphasize is this: that to love others and to seek to help them according to our ability and their needs is the Divinely-appointed way to gain the blessings we seek to assist others in gaining.

If we are mourning the loss of friends, we shall find relief in comforting other mourners; if we are weak, we shall gain strength by helping the weak; if we are in doubt and darkness, we shall gain light by giving it to others. "Give and it shall be given to you" is a law of the Divine order, and it cannot by any possibility fail of fulfilment. We say, then, to every bereaved and sorrowing soul, comfort the bereaved, help the sorrowful, strengthen the weak, give hope to the despairing, and you will find that what you give to others will be given to you, "good measure, pressed down and running over."

But we must not expect this relief will come at once. It cannot be given in an arbitrary way, as we can give a dime to a beggar. It can come only by a gradual change in our own minds. But it will surely come. The Lord Himself is pledged to it. All His laws favor it. If we believe that He means what

He says and that He will keep His promises, we can trust Him and wait patiently for Him, knowing that He will bless us in the best way and in the best time. Our experience will accord with the Psalmist's: "I waited patiently for the LORD: and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

"He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

"And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. . . .

"Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust."

CHAPTER IX.

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR MAN.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—JOHN iii. 16.

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. . . .

“If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”—JOHN xiv. 21, 23.

“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”—JEREMIAH xxxi. 3.

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.”—ISAIAH lxiii. 9.

“The LORD is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

“The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.”—PSALM cxlv. 8, 9.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR MAN.

THERE is an infinite source of consolation, comfort, and strength specifically adapted to every human condition. It is a fountain of life, and it communicates life to every form that receives it. It organizes forms, gives them consciousness, and dwells in them; it stimulates growth; it gives strength to the weak, reduces disorder to harmony, heals wounded affections, comforts the bereaved, and gives "the oil of joy for mourning." There is no sorrow which it cannot relieve. This fountain of healing, joy, and life is the Lord's infinite and unchanging love for man.

But little is known of the nature and extent of this love. We call it infinite, but the

word conveys no distinct and satisfactory idea to our minds. We cannot comprehend the infinite; but we can understand that there is no conceivable limit to its power and adaptation to human conditions and wants; that there is no human mind which it does not reach and in which it is not operative. That conception of infinite love is sufficient for all human needs.

Love is generally regarded as a pleasurable feeling, but it is not. It is the cause of the feeling, and bears the same relation to it that the fire does to the feeling of warmth. Love is a substance. It contains within itself in potency the germs of all forms, natural and spiritual, all forces, all order, all the activities in the spiritual and material universe. It is the primal self-existing fountain of all substance, all form, all power, all life.

“God is love,” says the apostle John. Infinitely more is meant by this than that God

loves. Men can love, but they are not love. They are merely organized forms capable of receiving love and made conscious and blessed by its reception from the Lord. It means that the inmost, essential, self-existent essence of God is love. He is love and wisdom conjoined. Love is His essence, wisdom is the form of His love as it goes forth into act. It is as impossible, therefore, that anything can proceed from Him which is not love in form and quality, as it is that anything can proceed from the sun but heat and light.

“There are three things,” says Swedenborg, “which constitute the essence of the Lord’s love: to love others out of or without Himself; to desire to be one with them; and to make them happy from Himself.” “Love consists in this: that its own should become another’s own.” According to these definitions of love, it is its essential nature to give itself to others and make them happy in its reception

and possession. This was the supreme end of the Lord in the creation of the material universe and everything in the three kingdoms of nature. Everything was created to be of service in the formation of man's physical nature, and that was created to be the basis of his spiritual nature and the means of its development. When these temporary instruments have performed their use they are thrown aside, and man comes consciously into the spiritual world; and, if he has lived a good life, he finds his eternal home in heaven, and the Lord's final end is accomplished in him. He helps to form a heaven of intelligent human beings who will be capable of receiving the Divine love in larger measures and purer forms forever. The Lord can give His own love to them to become their love, and they can pass it on to others to become their love, and both giver and receiver will be made happy by its reception and transmission.

A good love is a powerful attraction. Consequently it will tend to draw all the inhabitants of heaven into closer union with one another and with the Lord Himself. His prayer will be in constant and increasing fulfilment: "I pray that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. . . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Such is the nature and power of the Divine love in every degree and form of its existence, and such is its effect in every one who receives and transmits it.

But the Lord's love assumes various forms to adapt itself to the varying conditions and special wants of men, and these special forms are designated by special names. So far as relates to the inhabitants of this world, His love is principally exercised towards those who are in error and sin. The race has fallen from its original purity and spiritual perfection, and

the Divine love must assume forms adapted to the perverted states of men, and names must be given to it that characterize its special form and use. Every affection is the special form of love, and these forms are innumerable and various in quality and use. I can only mention some of the more general ones.

Mercy is one of the most common, and is frequently represented as one of the essential qualities of the Lord's love. Mercy is defined as "love grieving." It is love exercised towards the evil and the unthankful, towards the wicked in every state of their departure from goodness and truth and their hostility to the Lord. His mercies are represented as great, as manifold, as sure, as tender, as enduring forever. His loving-kindness is said to be merciful. Men in humiliation and despair on account of their sins implore His mercy, rarely, if ever, His love. Mercy is not an occasional and fitful emotion of the Lord ex-

cited by the prayers and pathetic appeals of the sinner. It is as constant as the sun. It implies a kind disposition towards the sinner and a desire and constant effort to save him from the inevitable suffering caused by error and sin. Indeed, it is one of the most effective manifestations of pure, tender, perfect love, —a love that can be exercised only towards sinners.

This fact has a most important bearing upon the Lord's relation to men. All men are sinners. If He loves only those who have become regenerate and hates those who have not, He must hate the whole human race. There is no room for love, no occasion for the exercise of this pure and tender form of affection. He must be doing the opposite of what He commands us to do when He says, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you,

and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." If obedience to this command is the only way to become perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, can it be possible that He is not exercising the same mercy and tenderness of affection towards every one of His enemies? How can a man become perfect as his Father in heaven by exercising virtues which his Father does not? Would he not rather be exceeding his Heavenly Father in mercy and commiseration of the poor misguided sinner? Surely, this is too absurd for any rational mind to believe.

While man has any love for what is good and true the Lord can draw him towards Himself by the attraction of that affection. But when his nature becomes wholly perverted and antagonistic to every principle of goodness and truth he turns away from the Lord, closes

his mind against every influence of His love; he reverses his true and orderly relations to the Source of life and beats against the flow of its forces. When this is the case the sinner misjudges the love of the Lord. He thinks the change is in Him; that His love is turned to hatred, that He is his enemy, and now seeks to punish and destroy him. But there has been no change in the Lord. He loves him with the same tenderness as ever. His mercy is everlasting. He pities him in his misery, and does everything in His power to mitigate his sufferings and lead him back into the currents of the Divine order.

But as He cannot draw him by affection, He restrains him, if possible, by fears and penalties from going further astray; and in time, by instruction and by showing him how futile are all his attempts to find rest and happiness in the indulgence of error and sin, causes him, like the prodigal, to come to himself and return to his Father and home. The Lord's

relation to the sinner is described in the Word in the most awful terms language can supply; but this change is in accordance with the same principle which causes love to become mercy and the tenderest compassion.

These terms do not describe any change in the mind of the Lord; they depict a change in the appearance of the Divine love caused by a change of state in the mind of the sinner. We make ourselves the centre and estimate the value of everything by its relations to us. If the love of self and the world is our ruling motive, we call everything good which favors that love. Every one is a friend who promotes its interests, and every one is an enemy who puts obstacles in the way of our obtaining and enjoying it. We regard this world as the only real world, and this life as the real life. From this point of view the loss of the means of gratifying our natural affections and tastes is a severe privation, and the death of the material body the greatest calamity that can

befall a human being. All our hopes and fears are bounded by this world, and our highest conceptions of life are abundant means of gratifying our natural tastes and desires.

The Lord regards man from an entirely opposite point of view. He regards man as a spiritual being, and estimates the value of all natural attainments and possessions according to their use in promoting those interests. He looks to the eternal in everything temporal. He knows that man was made to love Him supremely and his neighbor as himself, and that he can gain his highest happiness in no other way. Consequently, His first call upon man is to change his mind. Hence arises collision. Man regards the Lord as his enemy. The Lord demands that man should leave all and follow Him. The Lord seeks in all He provides and in all He withholds to lead man in freedom to subordinate the love of self and the world to the love of the Lord and the neighbor. This implies a complete reversal

in the order of his nature. It is really a radical change of mind. It is a change in the point of view from which he regards himself and the Lord and every human being. It is an entire change in the measure by which he estimates all values. In a word, it is a complete reversal of all the ends of his life.

This change must also be effected by his consent and voluntary co-operation. While it is wrought by the Lord alone in the silence and secrecy of his inmost being, it must come down into his open and distinct consciousness, and he must meet the temptations and wage the conflict as if by his own power. He must lay down his selfish and worldly life in supreme affection and yield to the Divine guidance.

This work consists essentially in the creation of a new will and a new understanding. Man is "born from above." The spiritual degrees of his mind are opened. The Lord calls it the creation of new heavens and a new

earth. The true order of the human faculties is restored. Man comes into harmony with the Lord. Every fibre of his being vibrates in unison with the currents of the forces of life. He dwells in the Lord and the Lord in him.

This change has been wrought by the Divine love and wisdom. The Lord has been present with man every moment; He has provided the means for the accomplishment of this new creation; He has foreseen all the illusions of the senses to which man would be subject; all the evil affections that would entice and corrupt him; all the falsities that would lead him astray; all the sins that would pervert and corrupt his natural affections and close them against the exercise and development of his spiritual faculties; and He has done everything that infinite love and wisdom could do, without destroying man's freedom, to turn them to some good or prevent them, as far as possible, from doing harm.

Whatever form these means have assumed, whether of persuasion, entreaty, command, the promise of some great good, or of apparent anger and the threats of some terrible punishment, poverty and bereavement, or calamity in any form, they have originated in infinite love and been specifically adapted in every case to do the least harm or accomplish the greatest good. They all have originated in infinite compassion and have been carried into effect by the tenderest mercy. The Lord has been gentle and patient with all. If we could see but the smallest moiety of the love and wisdom the Lord has constantly exercised towards us, even in things that were naturally against us, we should be astonished at His unremitting care, we should be overwhelmed by a sense of His changeless love and unerring wisdom, which sees the end in the beginning and provides that the temporal shall promote our eternal good.

CHAPTER X.

HOW TO LOVE AND TRUST THE LORD.

“The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord:

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.”—MARK xii. 29, 30.

“They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.”
—PSALM cxxv. 1.

“Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.”—PSALM xxxii. 10

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

“Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the LORD Jehovah is the rock of ages.”—ISAIAH xxvi. 3, 4.

CHAPTER X.

HOW TO LOVE AND TRUST THE LORD.

I HAVE dwelt somewhat at length in the preceding chapters on the Lord's love for man for the purpose of gaining a true knowledge of its nature and His ways of exercising it. It is of the utmost importance to get a clear and true understanding of this subject, for it is central to all our knowledge of the Lord and of our relations to Him. There is not much said in the Sacred Scriptures by direct precept of His love for man by the special name of love, because it is revealed in an infinite variety of forms, each of which is designated by a special and an appropriate name. There is nothing in the universe which the Lord has created that is not a form and ex-

pression of His love, and more or less directly useful to man. The Lord embodies His love in deeds, and He desires to have His character known by its fruits.

There is much more said about the duty and importance of man's loving the Lord, because he is not naturally inclined to do it. For this reason he must be taught how to do it, and the necessity of doing it to gain eternal happiness. But he is not only taught by the Lord Himself the importance of loving Him; he is commanded to do it. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

But the Lord not only commands us in His Word to love Him, He tells us how to do it. It is by keeping His commandments; by living according to His statutes, precepts, and judgments. All the blessings He promises to bestow upon us are conditioned on our obedience to His commandments. We are not only

to know them, we are to do them. And we see in the history of the Jews that they were always prosperous when they obeyed them, and that all their calamities came upon them when they disobeyed them.

There is a cause grounded in the nature of things for these effects. The commandments are laws of life. They originate in the Divine nature and they are embodied in man's nature. Consequently, when the young man asked our Lord what good thing he should do that he might have eternal life, He replied, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." There is no other way, because they are laws of life. According to the same immutable law of the Divine order, He said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Here we have plain and simple directions how to love the Lord. It consists practically

in having the same ends in view that He has, and co-operating with Him in carrying them into effect. The Lord desires to make every human being happy, and He has created everything and ordained it to conduce to this end. All human employments, all domestic, industrial, all social, civil, and spiritual relations, are means to effect this central purpose of the Divine love. Every physical, intellectual, and moral power looks to this end. Human happiness is promoted by an innumerable number of small and apparently trivial things. A smile, a kind word, a cheering look, a helping hand, have an influence in making the burden of labor and sorrow less oppressive and shedding some light on the path of life.

The essential thing that gives spiritual value to all these special services to men is the motive which is put into them. If they are done to man as an expression of our love to the Lord, He accepts them as done to Him, and

the rule of judgment in our final account will be, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

This is the way the Lord loves us. It is by doing something to develop our spiritual faculties, to comfort us in sorrow, to relieve our sufferings, to protect us from evil, to supply us with the means of happiness, and to overrule even our severest bereavements and direst natural calamities to prevent greater evils or to conduce to some spiritual and eternal good. This is the way and the only way we can love Him. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Our love does not become fully ultimated and expressed until it is embodied in our deeds. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

If the Lord is a Being of infinite love; if,

as we have tried to show from His own testimony in the Sacred Scriptures, He is love in its uncreated essence; if infinite wisdom is the form of His love as it goes forth into act, He can have but one end in view, and that is the communication of His love to others, and He must do this in an infinitely wise way, in the largest measures and the most perfect forms. He can make no mistakes. He cannot leave anything unprovided that would contribute in the least degree to the accomplishment of His purpose. He cannot permit anything to occur that would prevent Him from attaining His end. The admission that such a hinderance was possible would be the denial that His love, wisdom, and power are infinite.

This is the point of view from which every event in our lives must be regarded. It is the only true measure of the good or evil of the greatest natural losses and severest natural afflictions, or of the highest success in business

and unbounded prosperity in all our natural relations. If those who are bound to us by the tenderest and most intimate natural ties are removed to the spiritual world; if we lose our property; if we are poor and feeble, and have a hard struggle to provide the necessaries of life when we have done the best we could, we must regard our privations as from the Divine love and wisdom, and comfort ourselves with the belief that poverty and suffering are better for us than riches and natural pleasures, and that the Lord sees how some great harm to our spiritual and eternal happiness is prevented, or some good more precious than money can purchase is made possible of attainment; and we shall be content to trust in the Lord and wait patiently for Him, knowing that He will fulfil His promises to the letter in the quickest and fullest manner.

But there are not many people who are willing to do this. They do not trust in the Lord;

they do not believe Him when He says, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in him." They do not believe in His love or wisdom. They think they know better what is good for them than He does. They estimate the qualities of every possession by an entirely opposite standard from the Lord's. They make love the standard as He does. But it is the love of self and the love of the world. Consequently, everything which favors these loves they regard as good and valuable in the degree that it favors them; and everything and every being that opposes them as hostile to their highest good. If they gain wealth, they regard themselves and are regarded by others as fortunate and prosperous. If they lose it, they are called unfortunate, and often are said to be ruined. If they are bereaved of children or those who are dear to them by other natural ties, they are often overwhelmed with grief.

Making themselves the centre of the uni-

verse, and regarding everything as good that promotes their selfish and worldly interests, they cannot avoid coming in contact with others who are acting from the same false principles. The inevitable result is conflict, unceasing vigilance to guard against loss, care, anxiety, and disappointment. Every man and woman whose ruling motive is the love of self and of the world learns from bitter experience the truth of the words: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest."

This must be so, for they have no sure foundation to rest upon. There is no one in whom they can implicitly trust. Even when their interests do not conflict with others, those upon whom they rely may be unable to help them. The physician cannot rescue the dying child from the grave. The husband or wife is already passing beyond the reach of human power; the estate fades away; cares, anxieties, sorrows, and troubles invade the domestic

circle; envyings, jealousies, animosities, for which there is no remedy, fret and sting, and cruel wrongs are inflicted. They cannot trust themselves even. They feel helpless, and often sink down in despair, and nothing but dire necessity drives them to effort.

But those who really trust in the Lord have an immutable foundation to rest upon. They have their trials and natural losses, their afflictions and bereavements, as well as the wicked. The loves of self and the world must be subdued. Sometimes it seems as though they were afflicted more than the wicked; but they have an unfailing support and access to an unfailing source of consolation of which those who trust in themselves have no knowledge. Our Lord has given a perfect picture of both classes in the parable of the house on the rock or on the sand: The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon both houses; but the house which had

been built upon the rock of Divine truths by doing them, stood, while the other, whose foundation was the sand of human opinion, fell, and great was the fall of it. It was the destruction of all the hopes of the foolish builder.

Our main concern, however, must be how to get this trust. Men despair of attaining it because they have the most mistaken ideas of how it is done. But there is no mystery about the means or methods. It is gained in the same way that we learn to trust in our fellow-men.

It cannot be attained by asking or wishing or even praying for it. It cannot be given as we can give a present to a friend. It cannot be gained in a moment. We trust those whom we supremely love. If we love ourselves above all others, we put our trust in ourselves. If we love the Lord as He commands us to do, we put our trust in Him. The process of gain-

ing this trust consists essentially in transferring our supreme love from ourselves to the Lord.

This is a slow and gradual process. It is the reversal of the whole order of our lives. It implies a true knowledge of the Lord, and this knowledge we must gain as we gain all knowledge. The principal source of this knowledge is the Sacred Scriptures. We must do as the Lord has commanded us. "Search the Scriptures," He says; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." They were given to men to reveal the existence and nature of the Lord and of His relations to men. His character is unfolded in the most minute and varied forms in Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms.

Can we find anything that shows Him to be unworthy of our confidence and trust to the uttermost? Even His severest condemnation

of the wicked is always accompanied by a desire to forgive their iniquities, to favor and bless them. Can He who is love fail to be merciful and bless? Can He who is the truth fail to speak it at all times?

But the plainest record of His character is contained in the Gospels. There is not a word He spoke nor an act He did recorded in them which shows Him to be unworthy of our trust. He was accessible to all, the poor as well as the rich; He fed the hungry; He healed the sick; He cleansed the lepers; He gave sight to blind beggars; He raised the dead; He invited the weary and heavy laden to come unto Him and He promised to give them rest; He sympathized with the poor and needy; "In all their affliction he was afflicted; . . . in his love and in his pity he redeemed them." He was tempted in all points as we are; He was mocked and buffeted and spat upon, crowned with thorns and crucified. "He is brought as

a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." And yet He had all power, and He could have scattered His enemies like chaff before the wind. But He did not come to destroy, but to save. Surely, if there is any being in the universe whom we can trust it is the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we must not only trust His willingness and power to help us. We must rest assured that He will do it at the best time and in the best way, and with the least possible suffering to us. We must trust that He will do the best He can for us in the least things as well as the greatest, and at all times. He watches over us when we sleep and cares for us when we wake, and directs every influence and every event in our lives to do us the least possible harm or to promote our highest good.

Every selfish and worldly affection we repress removes a hinderance to our attainment

of some genuine good. Every deed we do from love to the Lord or the neighbor is a step towards Him and heaven. It is the ultimate embodiment of an affection which came from Him. It is a permanent addition to our own life and an enlargement of our capacities to receive life from Him. It contains in its own nature a soothing balm for the irritations, the fret and worry of disorderly desires; comfort in our distress, hope in our despair, and consolation in all our bereavements. To all in every condition of life our Lord says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

THE END.

